

Serial No. 10/036,756
Art Unit: 3654

In the Claims:

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1. (Currently Amended) A cable shortener apparatus for permitting the length adjustment of a cable supporting a sign carrier from an overhead support, said cable having a certain diameter, said apparatus comprising:

a pair of rigid annular rings lockably engagable with one another, each ring having an inner arcuate hub flange which defines a hub surface for receiving at least one wrap of ~~a~~ said support cable;

an annular outermost edge on each of said rings, spaced apart from one another when said rings are mated together, said spaced apart annular edges defining a gap greater than said diameter of said support cable and less than twice said diameter of said support cable.

2. (Original) The cable shortener apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein each of said rigid annular rings has at least one arcuate locking flange for securing said rings to one another.

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3. (Original) The cable shortener apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein said arcuate locking flange and said arcuate hub flange are radially adjacent one another.
 4. (Currently Amended) The cable shortener apparatus as recited in claim 3, wherein each of said annular rings has at least two arcuate circumferentially aligned locking flanges, opposed to one another on an inner edge of each of said annular rings.
 5. (Currently Amended) The cable shortener apparatus as recited in claim 3, wherein each of said annular rings has at least two circumferentially aligned inner arcuate hub flanges, opposed to one another on an inner edge of each of said annular rings.
 6. (Original) The cable shortener apparatus as recited in claim 3, wherein said annular rings have an annular inner wall which defines a cable wrap area with said inner hub flanges, about which said cable is wrapped.

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7. (Currently Amended) The cable shortener apparatus as recited in claim 5, wherein said circumferentially aligned inner hub flanges on each of said rings are spaced apart from one another by at least 90 degrees.
 8. (Currently Amended) The cable shortener apparatus as recited in claim 4 ~~5~~, wherein said circumferentially aligned arcuate locking flanges on each of said rings are spaced apart from one another by at least 90 degrees.
 9. (Currently Amended) A method of adjusting a sign supporting cable holding a sign carrier from an overhead support, said cable having a certain diameter, said method comprising:
 - attaching an upper end of said cable to said overhead support;
 - attaching a lower end of said cable to said sign;
 - forming an annular hub with a first end and a second end;

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arranging a rigid, radially outwardly extending flange on each end of said hub, each of said radially outwardly extending flanges having an outer peripheral lip spaced apart from said outer peripheral lip of the other of said flanges by a distance greater than said certain cable diameter and less than twice said certain cable diameter;

wrapping or unwrapping said cable about the outer surface of said hub and between said radially outwardly extending flanges to adjust the length of said cable supporting said sign carrier.

10. (Original) The method as recited in claim 9, including:

forming said hub and radially outwardly extending flanges by mating together a pair of rigid annular rings, each of said rings having an arcuate hub portion and a rigid annular edge defining an inner and an outer wall member of each of said rings;

spacing said rigid annular edges apart by less than twice said certain diameter of said cable;

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wrapping said cable about said hub portion of said annular rings to change the length of said cable supporting said sign carrier.

11. (Original) The method as recited in claim 10, including:
forming an arcuate inner locking flange on each of said rings to permit said rings to lock onto one another.
12. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 10, including: rotating at least one of said rings about an axis of rotation so that said rings are out of phase with one another by at least 90 degrees to permit their interlocking when they are mated together.
13. (Original) The method as recited in claim 10, including:
spacing said inner locking flange on one of said rigid annular rings radially adjacent said arcuate hub flange of the other of said rigid annular rings when said rigid annular rings are mated together.

14. (Currently Amended) A cable shortener apparatus for permitting the length adjustment of a cable supporting a sign carrier from an overhead support, said cable having a certain diameter, said apparatus comprising:

a pair of rigid annular rings ~~having~~ each having an outer peripheral lip and an inner axially directed lip;

a short annular drum disposed between said rigid annular rings, said rings and said drum lockably engaged with one another, each of said axially directed lips of said rings and drum defining an inner hub for receiving at least one wrap of a said support cable, each of said spaced apart peripheral lips defining a gap less than twice the diameter of said support cable and also greater than said diameter of said support cable.

15. (Original) The cable shortener apparatus as recited in claim 14, wherein said annular rings and said drum are press fit together.

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M 16. (Currently Amended) A cable shortener apparatus for permitting the length adjustment of a cable supporting a sign carrier from an overhead support, said cable having a certain diameter, said apparatus comprising:

~~an~~ a rigid annular generally U-shaped channel formed of generally ~~toroidal~~ toroidal shape having an open outermost peripheral gap defined by a pair of radially outwardly directed walls;

~~an~~ a rigid outermost peripheral lip of each of said walls which are heat and/or pressure ~~formable toward on~~ formed onto one another to create a narrow rigidly spaced apart relationship of said outermost peripheral lips for squeezing release of a cable pulled therepast.

17. (Original) The cable shortener as recited in claim 16 wherein said spaced apart relationship is less than twice said certain diameter of said cable.

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18. (Currently Amended) The cable shortener as recited in claim 17,
wherein said cable is flexible strand of material and is about one
~~thirt~~ thirty-second of an inch in diameter.
